

Global Institute of Theology

**World Alliance of Reformed Churches
Trinity Theological Seminary (Ghana)**

Accra, Ghana, July 22 to August 15 2004

Living and learning in Africa in the context of a unique worldwide Reformed gathering

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) will hold its first Global Institute of Theology in Accra, Ghana, from July 22 to August 15 2004, in close cooperation with Trinity Theological Seminary, Ghana.

The purpose of the Global Institute of Theology is to give theological students and faculty from all over the world the opportunity of learning, teaching and doing theology in a fully intercontextual and ecumenical way, connecting theology at the local, regional and world levels.

The Global Institute of Theology will be held in conjunction with the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. This will be the first WARC assembly in the new century, and it will take place on African soil. It will gather some one thousand participants, including four hundred official delegates from more than two hundred member churches in over one hundred countries.

The specific goals of the Global Institute of Theology are fourfold:

1. To reflect theologically on the theme of the ongoing WARC General Council, "That all may have life in fullness" (John 10.10). This theme will be analysed in terms of the life and mission of the church, and the covenanting process initiated by WARC at the 23rd General Council in Debrecen for responding to economic injustice and environmental destruction;
2. To study contemporary theologies and missiologies in their interconfessional, intercultural and interreligious dimensions, and to discern their relevance to the council theme. This will include the study of lived and living missiologies and the ongoing WARC study on the mission of its member churches;

3. To introduce varying contextual perspectives on the Christian witness of the global Reformed family, bearing in mind our understanding of mission in six continents, and aware of what all our churches have to learn from contextual theologies all over the world; and
4. To strengthen global networks of sharing and reflection among theological students and faculty, church workers, theological institutions and churches for continuing action and reflection on the covenanting process. This will also contribute to the ecumenical formation of a new generation of church leaders.

These four goals will be reflected in the way in which we organize the institute. We will be meeting in Africa, a continent which has been marginalized in the process of globalization, and we will be learning what the churches of Africa have to say to the world situation and churches on other continents.

We will organize ourselves as an international community of scholars and learners, women and men, and our experiences and sharing will become the immediate context for what we do together.

The Global Institute is intended for theological students and pastors beginning their ministry

WARC is concerned with the intercontextual formation of new generations of Reformed leaders fully aware of the faith dimension of contemporary challenges such as economic injustice and environmental destruction and committed to interfaith solidarity, spiritual renewal, church inclusiveness and Christian unity.

The Global Institute of Theology is intended for up to 80 women and men from all continents who are either *a)* students preparing for the Christian ministry at a theological school related to a WARC member church or *b)* pastors in their first years of ministry recommended by WARC member churches. In addition, there will be 15–20 auditing theological students from Ghana.

Applicants should have a particular interest in ecumenical theology and mission. Efforts will be made to select a student body and faculty that will reflect gender and regional balance, and thus the diversity of the Reformed family in the world today.

Through lectures, seminars, exposures, contextual experiences, the sharing of stories and participation in the life of the churches of Ghana, the Global Institute of Theology will explore the theme of the General Council and related subjects.

We will participate fully in the life of the General Council, through Bible studies, worship, attendance at plenary and study sessions, and other events, and reflect critically upon it.

Students and faculty will meet regularly both inside and outside the classroom, both during the General Council and in our time together preceding and following the council.

We will live and work together on the campus of Trinity Theological Seminary, not far from the University of Ghana where the General Council will be meeting.

Course of Study: Exploring New Frontiers in Mission

Christian mission in a world where 15% of the population control 80% of the wealth is a growing concern among WARC member churches and Christians all over the world.

Several aspects of the world situation are immediately relevant to our study process. These include the revival of religious fundamentalism; the crisis in the ecumenical movement and ecumenical missiology in particular; the challenge of interfaith dialogue and interreligious conflicts; the challenge of peacemaking in the context of the current “war on terrorism”; the urgent need for continuing to address issues of gender, race and class. Of particular concern to WARC is the covenanting process of addressing worldwide economic injustice and environmental destruction.

The Global Institute of Theology will explore the results of a two-year study on the practice, understanding and renewal of mission among WARC member churches and engage in a dialogue with “post-colonial” issues emerging in the ecumenical missiologies currently practised in Asia and the Pacific islands, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Curriculum

All students will be required to take a core course (for 2.0 credits) and one of four possible elective courses (for 2.0 credits).

Academic credit according to international standards will be granted by Trinity Theological Seminary, but other possibilities may also be negotiated.

The language of instruction of the Global Institute of Theology will be English.

Core course:

Life in Fullness: Challenge to Theology and Mission

Students will accompany the work of the General Council by focusing on major threats to life at the beginning of the 21st century such as the global economy, the HIV/Aids epidemic, and threats to the environment, analysing and critiquing the churches’ responses to them. A covenant of life as a response of faith will be explored. Draft documents being prepared at the General Council will be analysed, and key delegates to the council will be invited for conversation.

Elective courses:

1. Confessing the faith today

The community of faith is called to confession whenever the integrity of the gospel and its proclamation are at stake. Many Christians are convinced that today they should confess the faith anew, in view of

global economic injustice and ecological devastation. The 23rd General Council (Debrecen, 1997) launched a process of recognition, education and confession in the Reformed family – a *processus confessionis*. The course will examine some recent examples of the confessional stance (the Barmen Declaration of 1934, the Confession of 1967 of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, the Confession of 1977 of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba, the 1982 WARC declaration of *status confessionis* on apartheid and the 1982 Confession of Belhar of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa). Other documents (Kairos, Road to Damascus) should be taken into consideration, as well as the meaning of covenanting for life.

2. New directions in mission for the 21st Century

The urgent need for a fresh understanding of the *missio dei* in the 21st century is the subject of this course, which will explore such subjects as the revival of religious fundamentalism; the crisis in ecumenical missiology; the challenge of interfaith dialogue and interreligious conflicts; and contesting the powers of globalization. We will critically analyse the two-year WARC mission study process, and from the diversity of our contexts offer theological perspectives and tools to enable students to develop new approaches to mission and evangelism in their churches.

3. Theology and mission of the church in Africa

This course will introduce students to the missiological and theological struggles of the church in Africa. In the end, the class will attempt to discern the mission of God in Africa for the future of the continent. The course will follow five key outlines, namely: a) Understanding traditional African thought-forms; b) Foreign missions in Africa; c) African churches in mission; d) Theological perspectives in Africa; and e) Discerning God's mission in Africa today.

4. Explorations in intercultural theology

Intercultural theology deals with the interconfessional, intercultural and interreligious dimensions of Christian faith from the viewpoint of a

theology of culture. It creates new space for Christian identity in the pluralistic context of late modernity. Storytelling and art will be introduced as new media of doing theology. As an intercultural community of students and staff, we will learn from each other. The conference venue will give us an excellent opportunity to study the case of Africa.

Coordination and faculty

The Global Institute of Theology will be coordinated by an international team which will bear responsibility for all matters related to the curriculum, administration and financial arrangements.

The coordinating team will also appoint an international faculty.

Prof. Dr Yong-Bock Kim (South Korea)

Moderator of the Department of Theology of the
World Alliance of Reformed Churches
Chancellor of the
Asia Pacific Graduate School for the Study of Life, Korea

Prof. Dr Jane Dempsey Douglass (USA)

Co-President of the Global Institute of Theology
Former President of the World Alliance of Reformed
Churches
Professor Emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary, USA

Prof. Dr Milan Opocenský (Czech Republic)

Co-President of the Global Institute of Theology
Former General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed
Churches
Professor Emeritus, Charles University, Czech Republic

Prof. Dr Joseph OY Mante (Ghana)

Ghana-based Coordinator for the WARC General Council and
the Global Institute of Theology
Dean of the Trinity Theological Seminary, Accra, Ghana

Prof. Dr Philip L Wickeri (USA)

Dean of the Global Institute of Theology
 Member of the WARC Mission Study Coordination
 Professor of World Christianity, San Francisco Theological
 Seminary, USA

Prof. Dr Volker Kuester (Germany)

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the
 Global Institute of Theology
 Professor of Intercultural Theology
 Kampen Theological University
 Kampen, the Netherlands

Rev. Priscille Djomhoué (Cameroon)

Worship Coordinator
 Global Institute of Theology
 Faculty of Protestant Theology, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus (Brazil)

Executive Secretary of the Department of Theology
 World Alliance of Reformed Churches

In addition, up to ten other faculty members will join the community of the institute from theological seminaries all over the world.

A Global Institute of Theology in cooperation with Theological Institutions from around the world

Through the Global Institute of Theology, the World Alliance intends to strengthen its ties with theological institutions related to its member churches as well as facilitate further communication and cooperation among theological schools from different regions of the world.

Significant aspects of the institute such as the recruitment of prospective students, securing the financial resources necessary to enable students from countries in the South to participate and the general academic requirements for its operation will be considered in consultation with supporting theological institutions.

The World Alliance is submitting three requests to theological institutions related to WARC member churches: 1. That each school pray for the work of the Global Institute of Theology; 2. That each school approached appoint up to three students to attend the institute and if necessary facilitate their participation; 3. That each school approached by WARC help to facilitate the participation of Reformed students from the South.

Further information and applications

Information on the Global Institute of Theology is available from the World Alliance, member churches and supporting theological institutions.

Applications for the Global Institute of Theology should be submitted no later than January 15 2004 and sent to:

Prof. Volker Kuester
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Global Institute of Theology
c/o Kampen Theological University
PO Box 5021
NL-8260 GA Kampen
The Netherlands

Further information on the Global Institute of Theology may be obtained from:

Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus
Executive Secretary of the Department of Theology
World Alliance of Reformed Churches
150, route de Ferney – PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland
Email: institute@warc.ch

For regular updates on the institute, visit the WARC website, or the Kampen Theological University website, www.thuk.nl

Your local congregation can join the worldwide gathering!

The World Alliance invites congregations around the world to journey with us towards the 24th General Council (Accra 2004): "That All may have Life in Fullness" (John 10.10).

Here are three resources your congregation may use.

Crossing Ten Seas

An illustrated resource, with 14 studies on issues related to the theme. Each study tells a story, offers a short theological reflection, asks questions for discussion and offers a prayer in response.

Ideal for use in Bible study groups, congregational fellowships, young adult groups. Available in English, French, German or Spanish.

Christian Education Outlines

14 outlines based on life-related issues facing the Reformed family today, intended for adaptation by Christian educators.

Each outline identifies scripture for Bible study and suggests questions, activities and commitments for six age groups, ranging from four years of age to adult. Available in English, French or Spanish.

Preaching with her on life in fullness

15 sermons by leading women theologians and pastors from around the world, reflecting on the Accra theme.

Based on the liturgical calendar, from Advent 2003 to Reformation Sunday 2004. Also included are sermons for International Women's Day, World Aids Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Available in English only.

Interested?

To order any of these materials, write to us at accra@warc.ch or visit our website at www.warc.ch.



24TH
GENERAL COUNCIL
ACCRA 2004

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